

Halton Hills debates Transit

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erupted into a display of rude behaviour designed to prevent a speaker from expressing a contrary opinion.

A distillation of the speakers' remarks show there are three general concerns, but the primary objection is cost. Ted Drewlo, Public Works Manager for the town acknowledges that transit does not pay for itself; it is a service the community provides.

Bill Leslie, a longtime town resident and electric wheelchair user, discussed the second major issue in favour of the service. Disabled and elderly people, a demographic that is increasing in our community, need a reliable transit system to enable them to get around the community independently.

The third point of view suggested that our community is built for cars, everyone has them and the money can better be spent improving the roads. Kathleen Williams, a visually impaired but ambulatory disabled Georgetown resident made a presentation that clearly demonstrated that this view is untenable and ignores the needs of many disabled and elderly residents who cannot drive.

There was a moment of levity that helped put things in perspective during the often-heated meeting. An anti-transit speaker was verbally dancing around his position that Halton Hills is an exclusive community and a transit system would detract from that status. An attendee remarked that not having a transit system will not keep the riff-raff out, they have cars.

The proposed transit system blends the current need for an expanded Activan service for disabled and seniors with a regular and reliable route pattern that will enable non-drivers to travel to appointments and shopping independently.

A second 17 seat bus will be used to

provide transportation to and from the Georgetown GO station at peak hours, relieving traffic levels in the station area and reduced the overloaded parking demand at the GO station. The bus will travel the established scheduled route during non-peak GO hours.

Fares will be the same as those for transit in Milton, cash fares of \$2.00 or \$1.75 for tickets. The cost of the system will be covered by the provincial gas tax rebate and a residential tax increase of about \$2.00 per household.

The absence of local business representation at the meeting is worth noting. A disabled attendee remarked that local businesses stand to gain from a transit system that brings shoppers to their stores and they should support it.

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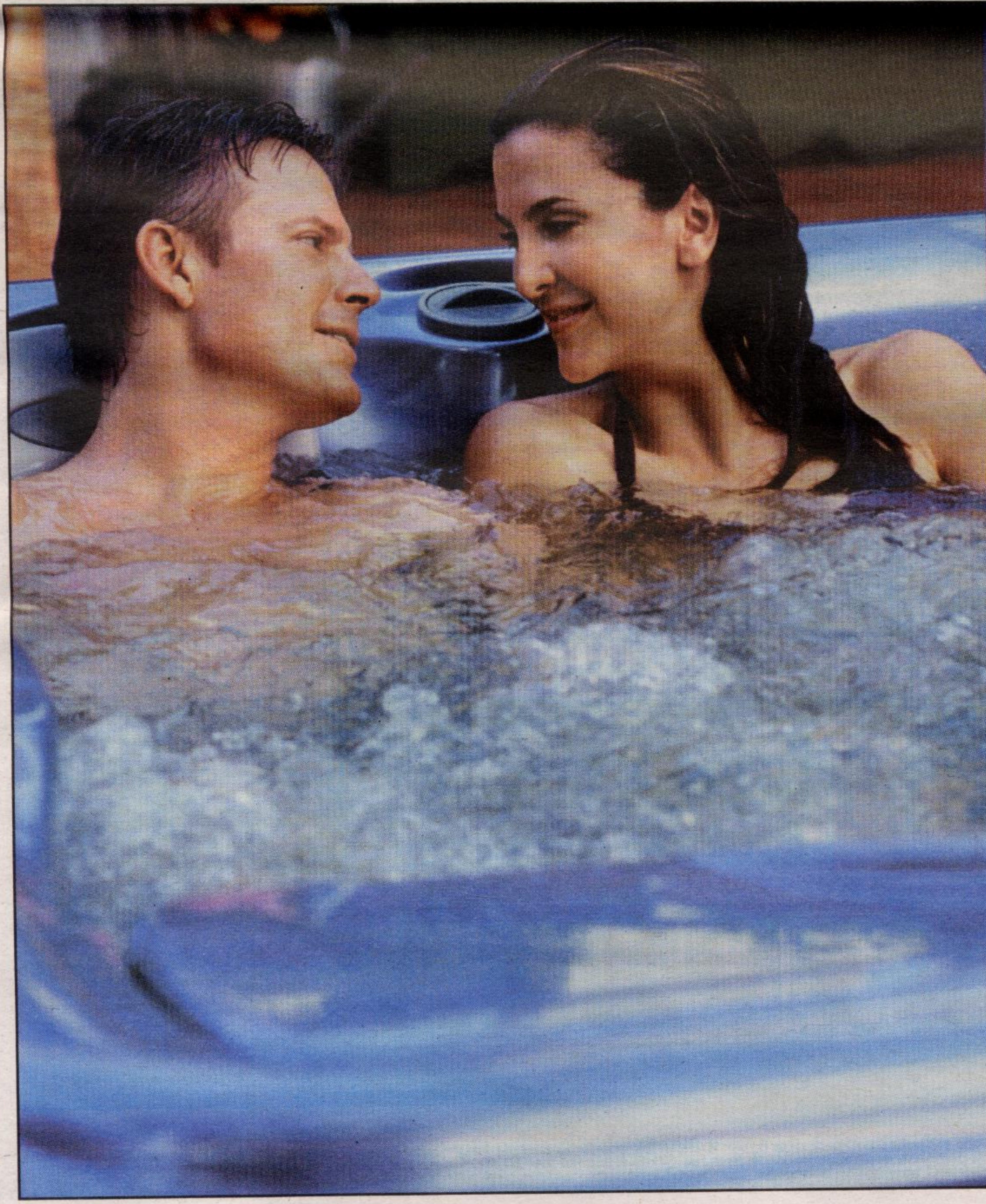
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